Trans-Lake Washington Project
Washington State Department of Transportation
Sound Transit

MEETING SUMMARY

TRANS-LAKE WASHINGTON PROJECT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
NORTH BELLEVUE COMMUNITY SENIOR CENTER, BELLEVUE, WA
APRIL 17, 2001 — 3:30 – 6:30 P.M.

INTRODUCTION, WELCOME, AND AGENDA REVIEW

Amy Grotefendt, EnviroIssues, opened the meeting and reviewed the agenda. The purpose of the meeting was to receive information about the proposed transportation demand management (TDM) package and discuss input to the Executive Committee regarding the proposed multi-modal alternatives. No changes were made to the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mark Liebman, AMEC Earth and Environmental, spoke on behalf of a group supporting the pursuit of a submerged floating tunnel under Lake Washington as part of a solution for mobility across the lake. The group, which includes representatives of the American Underground Construction Association and the International Tunneling Association, understands the potential social and economic aspects of the selected option as well as the technical challenges of a submerged floating tunnel in the corridor. The group maintains that a submerged floating tunnel would meet the needs and interests of groups within the corridor, and is confident the technical challenges can be overcome. Mark invited the committee members to the next meeting of the group.

Jonathan Dubman, Montlake resident, expressed concern that the solution for the Trans-Lake Washington Project may not result in the most effective solution, despite the thinking involved in creating the multi-modal alternatives. He stated that the process should be wary of the possibility of converting HOV lanes to GP lanes for some/all hours of the day. He also stated that it would be critical to evaluate congestion pricing, and that it should be integrated with the modeling rather than an add-on. He is also concerned with people basing decisions on flawed data.

PROPOSED TDM PACKAGE

John Perlic, Parametrix, and Daryl Wendle, Parametrix, presented the proposed TDM package that would be associated with each of the multi-modal alternatives to determine performance for the second-level screening. John Perlic introduced the rationale for the TDM program, the goals

and objectives, and the characteristics of the SR 520 corridor. He noted that the rate of drive alone trips has been decreasing in Bellevue, Redmond, Kirkland and Seattle, as a result of aggressive programs in accordance with the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) Act. He emphasized that the TDM program would complement existing programs in the various jurisdictions, as well as target the commercial and non-commute trips.

Daryl Wendle reviewed the strategies of the proposed TDM program. Elements include vanpooling, public information and promotion, employer based programs, TDM-supportive land use, public/private incentives, and pricing. There was discussion around several of the elements of the TDM elements. Points noted include:

- A question was raised as to whether land use proposals would be applied all along the corridor or only within the local jurisdictions. Daryl Wendle stated that they would likely be proposed for the length of the corridor.

- What funding pool would be available for TDM and transit oriented developments?

- Goals should place more emphasis on shortening or eliminating trips, rather than prioritizing mode shifts.

- The Trans-Lake Washington Project may not be the appropriate forum to address land use issues. Aubrey Davis, Executive Committee chair, stated in response that the proposed TDM package represents part of a response to deal with the unmet demand of 100,000 vehicle trips per day that will accompany any project in the SR 520 corridor.

- Objectives of pricing should state 'Reduce trips by reflecting and increasing trip costs'

- Transit pricing should also be looked at, as it will have an effect on peoples' desire to shift modes. Fares may be decreased.

- Gasoline cost increases should also be considered.

- Negative as well as positive effects of Park and Ride lots should be considered.

- Other cities should be used as case studies for dealing with urban congestion.

- Induced usage of an additional general purpose lane would demonstrate the continued effects of congestion. The most effective TDM strategy would be to not add any more lanes to the corridor.

- The TDM process should begin pre-construction, to help alleviate the congestion caused by construction.

- The TDM package needs to have more glamour to sell the idea to the public. What happens to the unmet demand of 100,000 trips per day? What does that mean economically? Other routes are chosen, including arterials and side streets, which pushes the problems into other areas.

- What is the time frame for implementing and understanding the effects of land use changes?

- Public information spending of $1-2 million/year is a lot of money to affect a 2% change in behavior. Mark Hallenbeck, UW TRAC, made that suggestion that real-time public information on the web and at bus stops be an area of attention and development. John Perlic stated that an equal amount might already be being spent by various agencies and jurisdictions. It was suggested that public information be made available about simple things, such as the availability of buses to the airport.

DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED MULTI-MODAL ALTERNATIVES

Amy Grotefendt introduced the discussion of the multi-modal alternatives proposed by the project team. There are eight alternatives proposed to be carried forward into second-level screening. Input from both the Advisory and Technical Committees will be provided to the Executive Committee on April 25, 2001. The Executive Committee will make a recommendation to the lead agencies on which multi-modal alternatives to be included in the second-level screening at that meeting. Each multi-modal alternative will be considered individually. Comments from the Advisory Committee, and a synopsis of discussion is included below.

1. Alternative 1 – No Action

- Is status quo the ultimate action if the Trans-Lake process fails?

- What is the reality of what happens if a storm knocks a portion of the bridge out? Will the alternative demonstrate the limitations of the no action possibility? Les Rubstello, WSDOT, stated that the EIS does not take into account unforeseeable calamities. WSDOT does not think that the no action alternative is a realistic alternative. However, it has been included here to comply with the requirements of the EIS process. It was decided that the previous definition of no action assumed too many repairs and structure replacements to be a true 'No Action' alternative for the EIS process. The realistic fall back option for WSDOT is represented in the Safety and Preservation alternative, should the project not be funded.

2. Alternative 2 – Safety and Preservation, I-90 HCT

- Clarify the addition of inside and outside shoulders.

- Why are the shoulder widths 10 feet on the inside, and 4 feet on the outside? Les Rubstello stated that design standards require a 10-foot inside shoulder for safe stopping in traffic, and outside shoulder widths vary, increasing as the number of lanes increases.

- There may not be a need to have a HOV lane along the length of the bridge, if the approaches have HOV lanes already that can merge with general traffic.

- The Safety and Preservation alternative could be viewed as the alternative that would occur if the Trans-Lake Washington Project did not happen. WSDOT would rework the SR 520 facility to meet their needs, and Sound Transit would continue to pursue their transit program on the I-90 corridor.

- There should be a separate Safety and Preservation alternative analyzed without assuming HCT on either corridor.

- Safety and Preservation should be viewed with the assumptions on I-90. There should not be a degraded safety margin on that corridor as a result of decisions on SR 520.

- Change the wording of the title to Safety, Reliability, and Preservation.

3. Alternative 3 – SR 520 HOV, I-90 HCT

- The alternative is not the same as the modal alternative B-2, differing in the fact that HCT is included in the I-90 corridor.

- Why is I-90 HCT a part of the Safety and Preservation and other alternatives? Don Billen, Sound Transit, stated that Sound Transit is interested in determining whether the long range vision should be amended. The series of alternatives that assume HCT on I-90 help analyze that, and it needs to be explicitly stated for the alternative.

- There was a comment to remove alternative 3, since both alternative 3 and 7 include SR 520 HOV. However, it was pointed out that alternative 3 includes I-90 HCT while Alternative 7 does not.

4. Alternative 4 - SR 520 HOV, GP, I-90 HCT

- There was a comment to remove alternative 4, since both alternative 4 and 8 include SR 520 HOV. However, it was pointed out that alternative 4 includes I-90 HCT while Alternative 8 does not.

5. Alternative 5 – SR 520 HOV, SR 520 HCT

- No specific points raised.

6. Alternative 6 - SR 520 HOV, GP, SR 520 HCT

- Drop the alternative, due to the extent of the impacts that would be caused by this wide of a footprint.

7. Alternative 7 – SR 520 HOV/BRT

- No specific points raised.

8. Alternative 8 – SR 520 HOV/BRT, GP

- No specific points raised.

General suggestions

Other suggestions were made through the course of the discussion and are summarized below.

- Widths of the facility as it passes though community areas should be displayed, along with the widths of a horizontally expanded facility.

- Greg Hill, Streeter Architects, recommended removing alternative 3, since alternative 7 accomplishes the same purpose with a wider HOV lane. He stated that the only difference between the two was the bus routing to downtown Seattle. He recommended removing alternative 4, since alternative 8 serves in a similar manner. The configuration would only change by about a 10-foot difference in width.

  Don Billen stated that in alternatives 3 and 4, which assume a fixed guideway on I-90, the importance of bus access into downtown Seattle from SR 520 would be lessened. In alternatives 7 and 8, which assume no fixed guideway facility across the lake, it is more important to bring buses reliably into downtown through the SR 520 corridor, and therefore the BRT/HOV option with a busway connection from SR 520/I-5 to downtown is proposed.

- If there are alternatives dropped, will the team be able to produce more information on the other alternatives? Les Rubstello stated that the team will do the right job in the correct amount of detail to make informed decisions. There is a potential that there would be more money available for other options if some are dropped, but it would likely be premature to drop alternatives without having data on them all.

- Bertha Eades, Redmond, stated that if the HCT system chosen is a bus-based system, diesel buses are noisy and create large amounts of air pollution. Elimination of that would require electric buses, which would require a fixed guideway system. At that point, it might be prudent to put in light rail. Rail should be looked at in the EIS as a comparison for the environmental impacts of buses.

- Elizabeth Newstrum, Yarrow Point, expressed concern about eliminating the westbound Harvard/Roanoke off ramp, stating that the school buses use it to avoid the Mercer weave into the downtown Seattle area.

- Les Rubstello stated that the assumptions and modeling in these alternatives are used to help the committees decide on a 4, 6, or 8 lane alternative. The transportation elements of each alternative will again be expanded in the EIS.

- There was a recommendation to eliminate all 8-lane alternatives.

- There were recommendations to continue to evaluate all of the alternatives, allowing the team to be open in their analysis.

- Get a response about what constitutes a legally defensible EIS from a legal authority.

- Demonstrate the HCT and lane configurations in ways other than expanded horizontally; it will be a public perception problem to show lanes expanded in that way only.

- Consider using the HOV lane for transport of goods, as well as people.

- Information about the interchange alternatives and local traffic flow will be needed to help make decisions about the choice of 4-, 6-, or 8-lane alternatives.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Amy Grotefendt reviewed the upcoming meeting schedule. The next Advisory Committee meeting will be held May 23, 2001, at the Museum of History and Industry in Seattle. It will be the first of three all-committees workshops. The first will focus on community enhancement and modeling, the second on June 6 will focus on transportation/TDM findings and HCT technology assessment findings, and the third on June 13 will focus on environmental findings, cost opinions, and initial recommendations for the EIS alternatives. A decision on the EIS multi-modal alternatives is scheduled for June 27th by the Executive Committee, with another meeting scheduled for July 11 as needed.

MEETING HANDOUTS

- Agenda
- Highway Alternatives Modal Evaluation Transportation, Environmental and Cost Findings, report, April 10, 2001
- High Capacity Transit Modal Evaluation Transportation, Environmental and Cost Findings, report, April 10, 2001
- Draft TDM Element of Trans-Lake Multimodal Alternatives, presentation, April 2001
- Proposed Multi-Modal Alternatives, graphic, May 2001
- Proposed Alternatives for Multi-Modal Evaluation, draft matrix, March 13, 2001
- Response to Questions and Issues from Executive, Technical, and Advisory Committee Members, April 17, 2001
- Meeting schedule

Additional Handouts

- Open letter to the Trans-Lake Washington Project, from Mark Liebman et. al, regarding consideration of submerged floating tunnels

MEETING ATTENDEES

Advisory Committee Members

Present		
X	Amick	Jean

	Andrews	Deborah
X	Aschenbach	Hans
	Beltz	Allison
X	Culp	Barbara
	Dent	Bob
X	Eades	Bertha
	Gatchet	Dan
X	Gunby	Virginia
X	Hallenbeck	Mark
X	Hart	Fred
	Hill	Jim
X	Hill	Gregory
	Holman	Linda
	Hurley	Peter
X	(Rutherford	Scott)
X	Joneson	Kingsley
X	Leed	Jean
X	MacIsaac	Jim
X	Newstrum	Elizabeth
	Odell	Nina
X	Ray	Janet
X	Reckers, Jr.	James
	Resha	John
	Sheck	Ronald
X	Stelle	Claudia
X	Tate	Bob
	Tochterman	Thomas B.
X	Wasserman	Eugene
X	Weed	Mark
X	White	Rich
X	White	Roland
	Wyble	John

Other attendees

Philip Grega
Ed Switaj, City of Seattle
Mark Liebman
Jonathan Dubman, Montlake

Project Team

Les Rubstello, WSDOT
Rob Fellows, WSDOT
Don Billen, Sound Transit
John Perlic, Parametrix
Daryl Wendle, Parametrix
Cathy Strombom, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Hans Saxer, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Lorie Parker, CH2M Hill
Amy Grotefendt, EnviroIssues
Paul Hezel, EnviroIssues

PJH